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THE OLD TESTAMENT NOT A MILLSTONE.

BY REV. DR. GEORGE COULSON WORKMAN.

THE article entitled "Christianity's Millstone," by Prof. Goldwin Smith, in the December number of this REVIEW, has made considerable stir throughout the continent, and in some communities has created a sensation.

Dr. Smith is a practised writer, as well as an accomplished scholar, and his article is both interesting and stimulating; but his treatment of the Old Testament, with which his essay deals, is disappointing and unsatisfactory.

The aim of the essayist is, apparently, to foster a more rational view of the Scriptures, which is certainly a consummation devoutly to be wished; but the way in which he seeks to accomplish his object is extraordinary. Were a Biblical critic to discuss history as this critic, who is an adept in history, discusses Scripture, the distinguished historian would undoubtedly complain of unfairness, if not of incompetence. No impartial scientist would treat the subjects of his department, or suffer them to be treated, as Professor Smith has treated the writings of the Old Testament.

The method he has adopted is peculiar. Assuming that Biblical inspiration is equivalent to dictation by the Holy Spirit (a theory which no scholar holds), he shows that the Old Testament contains some things which are incompatible with such a view (a truism which no scholar doubts), and then he asks if these things are inspired (a supposition which no scholar entertains). Pursuing this plan throughout his article, he presents, perhaps, the most misleading, if not the most mischievous, critique of the Hebrew Scriptures that has ever been written by a reverent, religious scholar; so that to the superficial reader his

essay seems like a formidable arraignment of the Old Testament, whereas it is simply an arraignment of an obsolete theory of the Old Testament. That is to say, he arraigns the difficulties connected with an old-fashioned view of Scripture, which a recent, but truly evangelical, view removes.

To use the results of criticism, as Dr. Smith does, to arraign the misconceptions of traditionalism, without showing the elements of truth which the latter contained, is as unwarrantable as to take the established facts of chemistry to demolish the absurd superstitions of alchemy, without showing the important service which it rendered in the development of the more perfect science. By such an unfair use of facts, a modern specialist could make almost any ancient department of knowledge appear ridiculous.

The occasion of this elaborate essay, it appears, was an address, delivered before the members of the recent English Church Congress, at Norwich, England, by Professor Bonney, Canon of Manchester, who made a few harmless but unhappy remarks respecting the true character of certain parts of the Old Testament, which Dr. Smith considers "a bold and honorable attempt to cast a millstone off the neck of Christianity by frankly renouncing belief in the historical character of the earlier books of the Bible."

Taking as a text this statement, which is worth repeating here, Dr. Smith suggests that, in order consistently to make such an acknowledgment, the author of it must renounce certain unworthy conceptions of doctrine which there is no reason to suppose he holds.

"With the historical character of the chapters relating to the creation," says the essayist, "Canon Bonney must resign his belief in the fall of Adam; with his belief in the fall of Adam he must surrender the doctrine of the Atonement, as connected with that event, and thus relieve conscience of the strain put upon it in struggling to reconcile Vicarious Punishment with our sense of justice. He will also have to lay aside his belief in the Serpent of the Temptation, and in the primeval personality of evil."

Professor Smith is too profound a student not to know that the account of the Fall in Genesis, which was once regarded by theologians as literal history, is now regarded by Christian scholars as religious allegory, an allegory, like a parable, being a form of narrative employed by the sacred writers to illustrate and inculcate spiritual truth. This portion of Scripture is an allegorical or a parabolical representation of the beginning of moral evil in human nature.

Interpreted in harmony with its figurative style, the account contains neither irrational doctrine nor unhistoric fact. Inasmuch as the doctrine of a personal devil does not belong to Mosaism, and does not appear in the Old Testament before the time of the Exile, the best interpreters of Genesis do not hold that the story of the Fall teaches the primeval personality of evil. "The story apparently presupposes an ungodly principle which had already entered the world," says Oehler, "but does not give any further account of it." Inasmuch, too, as the serpent was used, from prehistoric times throughout the East, as an emblem of an evil principle in the world, a true interpretation of the account does not require us to believe in the actual appearance of a tempting serpent.

While Paul uses the familiar form of Genesis in introducing the doctrine of Atonement, and, in that sense, connects it with the fall of Adam, the Apostle really connects the doctrine with the entrance of sin as a moral fact into human nature. Consequently we are not required by anything in Scripture "to reconcile vicarious punishment with our sense of justice," because the New Testament writers nowhere represent God as punishing Christ for the sins of men. They simply represent Christ as, in loving obedience to the will of his Father, effecting the reconciliation of man to God.

Neither Canon Bonney, whose words have been so strangely used, nor the editor of *Lux Mundi*, whose views have not been fairly represented, needs anyone to hold a brief for him; but when, referring to certain mythical or traditional materials out of which the latter writer admits that some parts of the Old Testament were developed, Dr. Smith says, "It is difficult to see how myths can in any sense be inspired, or why, if the records are in any sense inspired, the Church should not be able to insist on their historical character," he must know that the writer in question does not assume that myths are inspired. He simply regards traditional narratives, such as those presented in the earlier chapters of Genesis, as containing "great inspirations about the origin of all things—the nature of sin, the judgment of God on sin, and the alienation among men which follows their alienation from God,"—inspirations "conveyed to us in that form of myth or allegorical picture, which is the earliest mode in which the mind of man apprehended truth."

In close connection, when the essayist asks, "Is it conceivable that the Holy Spirit, in dictating the record of God's dealings with mankind for our instruction in the way of life, should simulate the defects of human evidence?" he knows very well that such a supposition is as unworthy as it is irrational. He knows, too, that no scholar of repute to-day accepts the "dictation" theory of inspiration, because, in the closing paragraph of his article, he speaks of "Verbal Inspiration" as being but "a consecrated tradition." He must also know that, instead of assuming that the Holy Spirit dictated the records of Scripture, or simulated the defects of human evidence in dictating them, the editor of the volume already mentioned expressly says that "the recorders of Israel's history were subject to the ordinary laws in the estimate of evidence, (and) that their inspiration did not consist in a miraculous communication to them of facts as they originally happened." Holding with other Christian scholars that Biblical inspiration refers to the spiritual or divine element in the Scriptures, the same writer further says: "The inspiration of the recorder lies primarily in this, that he sees the hand of God in the history and interprets his purpose."

Moreover, when the essayist suggests that "the first step towards a rational appreciation of the Old Testament is to break up the volume, separate the acts of Joshua or Jehu from the teachings of Jesus, and the different books of the Old Testament from each other," he must certainly know that what he so sagaciously proposes is just what Christian teachers are doing, and just what they have been doing for a great many years. Modern scholars do not put all the books of the Bible on the same level, or attach to all parts of it the same importance.

In view of these well-known facts, it seems scarcely fair of the essayist to say, "We have forcibly turned Hebrew literature into a sort of cryptogram of Christianity," as though respectable scholarship were still pursuing such a foolish course. It is a good while since the Song of Songs, which all reputable scholars now regard as a lyric poem intended to display the triumph of pure affection over the temptations of wealth and rank, has been turned by intelligent interpreters into "a cryptogrammic description of the union of Christ with his Church."

Biblical scholarship is not in such a deplorable condition as Dr. Smith's article implies. It recognizes all the difficulties,

moral, historical, or theological, that really exist ; but it sees a way by which, in every instance, the difficulty may be explained in harmony with the claims of Scripture, as well as with the claims of reason.

The following analysis will let the reader see how unfair to the Hebrew Scriptures Dr. Smith has been.

1. He criticises the unhistoric character of the Old Testament record. Speaking of the mythical or traditional features of the subject-matter of the book of Genesis, he says : "The history of every nation begins with myth. A primeval tribe keeps no record, and a nation in its maturity has no more recollection of what happened in its infancy than a man of what happened to him in his cradle."

This statement is unquestionably true, but its implication is misleading. A myth is not a falsehood, much less an imposture. It is a presentation of truth in fictitious or rather tropical form. As the editor of *Luz Mundi* says :

"It is a product of mental activity, as instructive and rich as any later product, but its characteristic is that it is not yet distinguished into history, and poetry, and philosophy. It is all of these in the germ, as dream and imagination, and thought and experience, are fused in the mental furniture of a child's mind."

The narratives of Genesis, however, cannot properly be called myths. The earlier ones express the world's best traditional conceptions, at the time when they were compiled, respecting the origins of things ; and they embody, in tropical form, not only important historic facts but also great moral and religious truths. Owing to their age and character, though, it should not be claimed for either the earlier or the later narratives of the Pentateuch that they furnish a perfect modern scientific ethnology, chronology, cosmogony, or synopsis of history, although from them each of these subjects may have derived important aid.

Canon Bonney's admission, therefore, that "the increase of scientific knowledge has deprived parts of the earlier books of the Bible of the historical value which was generally attributed to them by our forefathers," is one which does not at all involve the essayist's conclusions. Our forefathers thought that the first part of Genesis was the oldest piece of literature in existence ; but the recent decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions has revealed another still more ancient literature, one which

gives us an Assyrian account of the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel, in a form that is shown by its mythological and polytheistic features to be much older than the Biblical account, the latter being a purified and spiritualized and monotheized version of the former.

Christian scholars have recognized for a long time that the ethnological statements of the book of Genesis are imperfect, just as they have recognized that the genealogical tables of the Evangelists are incomplete ; but they do not claim that such matters were dictated by the Holy Spirit. They also recognize that the stories of the Flood and Tower of Babel, though having an historical basis, are characterized by a manner of expression which must be interpreted according to the habit of Oriental speech, and that they contain traditional elements which are peculiar to all such ancient accounts. But this latter fact does not lessen the value of either story as a primitive means of imparting religious instruction.

When Dr. Smith, therefore, complains in the language of the editor of *Luz Mundi* that "the Church cannot insist upon the historical character of the earliest records of the ancient Church in detail, as she can on the historical character of the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles," it is sufficient to reply that the Church does not insist upon the perfect historicity of those ancient narratives which are known to contain traditional elements, and which are also known to have been compiled long after the events recorded are said to have taken place. She frankly admits that, previous to the time at which Abraham is believed to have emigrated with his family into Palestine, we cannot determine with certainty much of the history or the chronology pertaining to the primeval and patriarchal ages, because so little of the early record can be definitely traced to a period at all approaching the events.

2. He criticises the unscientific character of the Old Testament teaching. After mentioning several times the crude conceptions of the Mosaic cosmogony, he says, "The Old Testament is altogether geocentric, and not merely in the phenomenal sense."

That the Mosaic cosmogony represents the earth and not the sun as the centre of the universe, is a fact familiar to the most superficial reader of the Bible ; but no fair-minded person thinks

of blaming Moses for this geocentric view, much less of holding him responsible for it. Up to a few centuries ago, the whole world held substantially the same view. Like every other Scripture writer, the compiler of the book of Genesis shared the scientific conceptions of the age in which he lived, and wrote in harmony with the ideas which then prevailed. Moreover, he does not profess to give us a miraculous history of creation, nor does the Church claim that he anticipated in any way the results of modern discovery.

Supposing the story of creation to be a miraculously revealed account of the origin of all created objects, theologians once believed that the whole universe was constructed piece by piece, that the first man was made directly from the dust of the ground, that the first woman was built out of a rib taken from his side, and that the world was formed in six days of twenty-four hours each. They now recognize, however, that some features of the story are not to be treated literally, but tropically; and they also recognize that the aim of the writer was not to explain how anything actually came into being, or to tell how long the process of creation lasted, much less to give a complete history of our planet from the beginning, but rather to show that everything owes its existence to the creative energy of God, and to describe the divine adaptation of the earth to be the abode of creatures such as can subsist upon it.

Hence Christian scholars do not "play fast and loose either with words or with science," in order to bring the story of creation "into harmony with what we have learned from geology." They simply take the story for what it is, namely, a popular presentation of the more striking phenomena of creation for the purpose of teaching, not science or philosophy, in the technical sense of these terms, but moral and religious truth. In broad outline, they recognize that there is a substantial agreement between the narrative in Genesis and the teaching of science; and that is all we should expect, as well as all the Scripture, properly expounded, leads us to expect.

But, while the general order of Genesis is such as physical science now accepts, judicious teachers do not maintain that the narrative in the first chapter of the book is perfect geology. On the contrary, they perceive that the writer's description of the Spirit's operations as so many creative acts, occupying so many

solar days, though having a general foundation in nature, merely represents an orderly progress in the work of creation. Instead of claiming, therefore, that the story of creation coincides in all respects with the results which physical investigation has disclosed, such teachers, recognizing the popular and picturesque character of the account, do not attempt to correlate Genesis and geology day by day.

Since the first chapter of Genesis teaches neither geology nor chronology, there is nothing in it inconsistent with the doctrine of evolution that the world was formed by a gradual process of development in harmony with natural laws, or with the declaration of geology that animal life existed for ages before the human race appeared. That all created things are due to divine activity, and that spiritual death, or separation from God, is the outcome of human disobedience—these are two fundamental facts which the story of creation teaches, and which the testimony of the rocks does not gainsay.

Thus Christian geologists are not driven to the desperate shifts to which Professor Smith remembers that Dr. Buckland "was driven in his efforts to reconcile the facts of his science with the Mosaic cosmogony, the literal truth of which he did not venture to impugn." No competent instructor now finds anything in the story of creation to impugn, since, technically speaking, the account is neither scientific nor unscientific, but nonscientific. The book of Genesis gives us no theory, in the modern use of the term, either of the process of creation or of the origin of the world; it merely connects God with creation in an order founded upon the best conceptions of nature to which the mind of man had then attained.

3. He criticises the imperfect character of the Old Testament morality. Referring to a weak as well as an unwise defence, by the editor of *Lux Mundi*, of the most startling of the so-called imprecatory psalms, he says, "This is the way in which we have been led by our traditional belief in the inspiration of the Old Testament to play fast and loose with our understandings and with our moral sense."

4. The best expositors do not, in their interpretation of the revengeful imprecations of the Old Testament, play fast and loose either with understanding or with moral sense. While they perceive that, in the majority of vindictive passages, the speaker

or the psalmist, as the case may be, zealous for the honor of Jehovah, so identifies himself with God that he regards God's enemies as his enemies, and hates them simply because, being evil, they are enemies of good, they frankly admit with Dr. Moll, in Lange's *Biblework*, that Psalm cix. displays a spirit "which is not free from carnal passion."

The true explanation of the revengeful spirit here displayed is found in the difference between the view-point of the law and the view-point of the Gospel—a difference indicated by our Lord's rebuke to his disciples for manifesting the zeal of Elijah, when they desired him to imitate the spirit of the Old Testament dispensation by commanding fire from heaven to consume the inhabitants of a hostile village. Owing to the incomplete development of spiritual ideas under the old dispensation, men's conceptions of morality were necessarily imperfect. Hence the Old Testament characters could not reasonably be expected to speak and act according to the exalted standard of the Sermon on the Mount.

But is inspiration compatible with imperfect morality? Certainly; because, if a man honestly conforms to the highest moral standard of his time, he is a truly moral man. That inspiration is compatible with immorality no rational teacher maintains; but that inspiration is compatible with imperfect or crude morality may be consistently maintained, because, as Dr. Bruce says, "Crude morality is compatible with a good conscience."

Such examples of cruelty and treachery, therefore, as those to which Dr. Smith refers, those which he considers "responsible in no small degree for murderous persecutions, and for the extirpation or oppression of heathen races," were quite in keeping with the vindictive spirit, as well as with the crude morality, of Old Testament times. Such deeds of violence could, doubtless, have been justified by the persons who committed them, in harmony with the highest moral standards which then existed; but a wise apologist does not think of defending them. He simply claims that they should be judged, not according to the complete statements of Christian ethics, but by the crude conceptions of the age in which they occurred.

4. He criticises the inhuman character of the Old Testament warfare. Commenting on the cruelties connected with the settlement of Palestine, and complaining of the inconsistent replies

which foolish apologists have made to the objections raised by humanity against the slaughter of the Canaanites, he says, "We are in no way bound to believe that God so identified himself with a favored tribe as to license it to invade a number of other tribes which had done it no wrong, to slaughter them and take possession of their land."

True apologists do not attempt to justify the butcheries and barbarities of the ancient Hebrew wars, or to maintain that Israel had a legal right to the land of Canaan. They neither claim that, in conquering the country, the Israelites did but recover their own, nor hold that, having been driven by force from Egypt, they had a right to help themselves to a home where they could find it, by putting all the existing inhabitants to the sword, nor do they fall back upon the simple command of God, justifying it on the ground that the Canaanites were idol-worshippers and consequently ignorant of the true God. They believe it to have been the purpose of Providence that the Israelites should possess Canaan, just as they believe it to have been his purpose that the Puritans should possess New England; but they do not consider Providence responsible for the inhumanities either of Israelites or of Christians.

Instead of holding that "God so identified himself with a favored tribe as to license it to invade a number of other tribes which had done it no wrong, to slaughter them and take possession of their land," modern apologists hold that the Hebrew leaders so identified themselves with Jehovah that they regarded anything done in his name as a divine design. The explanation of this fact is very simple. The Israelites were not a philosophic, but a religious, people. Unaccustomed to philosophical speculation, but impressed with physical phenomena as manifestations of the Deity, they beheld God everywhere and traced his hand in everything. Connecting everything directly with God, the Old Testament writers did not duly discriminate between a natural consequence and a divine design. As Bishop Perowne says, "The Biblical writers drew no sharp, accurate line between events as the consequence of the divine order and events as following from the divine purpose. To them all was ordained and designed of God."

Hence the Israelites saw no place for chance or accident in creation. Believing that everything was of God, they naturally

believed that everything was designed of him. All those expressions, therefore, which represent him as prompting men either to be cruel or to do evil should be interpreted as Hebrew forms of speech that originated in a Semitic mode of thought. Thus the harsher features of the Old Testament are capable of a rational explanation, and, in this sense, of a sufficient vindication. In their conquest of Canaan, the Israelites adopted the methods of warfare that were characteristic of their age; and, impelled by a religious motive, they dealt with their captives in such a way as they believed would, in the circumstances, promote the purest worship of Jehovah and the highest welfare of his people.

5. He criticises the irrational character of the Old Testament sacrifice. Discussing the leading features of Hebrew law, he comes at length to the sacrificial worship of the Israelites; and, though he remarks the absence from the Mosaic ritual of human sacrifice, which was practised even by the polished Athenians, he takes occasion to say that "all sacrifice is irrational."

Many of the heathen conceptions of sacrifice were, doubtless, irrational; but the sacrifices of the Old Testament present a marked contrast to those of the heathen, and express the deepest religious instincts of the human heart. In its devouter moods, at least, the soul of man is drawn by a sort of natural impulse to express in deeds, as well as in words, its obligation of indebtedness to God. That inward prompting which impels a man to offer prayer or praise impels him also to offer sacrifice of some kind, either outward or inward or both. The same instinct that leads him to perform acts of devotion leads him, according to his education and development, to perform acts of service or sacrifice. Strictly speaking, even propitiatory sacrifices are merely symbols of reconciliation and communion between man and God.

In an uncultivated and undeveloped state, man endeavors to establish a relation of reconciliation and communion between himself and his Maker by giving to the Deity a portion of what the Deity has given to him; in a more cultivated and developed state, man endeavors to establish this relation of harmony by consecrating himself and his substance to God. Thus in principle, sacrifice is simply the putting of a part of oneself, so to speak, into that which one devotes to God; and such an act can scarcely be regarded as irrational.

6. He criticises the anthropomorphic character of the Old

Testament language. Alluding to an event recorded in Genesis which represents Jehovah as appearing to Abraham and as being entertained by the patriarch, he asks, "Why should we force ourselves to believe that the Being who fills eternity and infinity became the guest of a Hebrew sheik?"

Dr. Smith asks this question as though modern scholars interpreted the anthropomorphic language of Scripture literally, whereas he knows that they regard all those expressions which seem to ascribe to God the possession of bodily parts and organs, such as hands and feet, eyes and ears, mouth and nose, simply as symbolic. The application to God, in a figurative way, of terms which properly relate to human beings, is as reasonable, however, as it is natural. In the sphere of representative thought, no religion can dispense entirely with anthropomorphic expressions. In accordance with our mental constitution, divine truths can be neither conceived by us nor conveyed to us without the employment of such figurative language.

When the essayist, therefore, asks, "Why should we force ourselves to believe that the Being who fills eternity and infinity became the guest of a Hebrew sheik?" he is well aware not only that the Old Testament teaches the spirituality of God, but also that the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, to which he here refers, contains an account belonging to a time when it was generally believed that men sometimes entertained angels and even gods, and that consequently the account is to be explained as an anthropomorphic representation of an ancient manifestation of the divine presence. Hence, we are not to infer from the language that the Deity really exists in the shape of a man, or that he actually appeared to Abraham with a human body, and walked and talked and ate with the old patriarch!

7. He criticises the partial character of the Old Testament covenant. Representing the Deity as having "entered into a covenant with the sheik's tribe," as he calls the descendants of Abraham, "to the exclusion of the rest of the human race," he asks, "Can we imagine the author of the universe limiting his providential regard and his communication of vital truth to his creatures by tribal lines?"

Here is a three-fold misconception. In the first place, according to the record in the book of Genesis, the covenant of Jehovah with Abraham was not made to the exclusion of any race, but

rather to the inclusion of every race. "In thee," or, "in thy seed," the record reads, "shall all the families (nations) of the earth be blessed." The gracious divine purpose of revelation and redemption, which is expressed in so many Old Testament passages, though it has a primary reference to Israel, may be shown to have an ultimate reference to mankind. As set forth in Scripture, the election of the Israelites was simply a conditional choice of a certain people, on account of a special fitness for a certain work.

In the second place, instead of teaching that God limits the manifestation of his providential regard to men by tribal lines, the Old Testament teaches a divine superintendence that extends to all men, so that they all are sharers alike in the care of Providence. The author of Psalm lxx., for instance, represents God as the hearer of prayer, to whom all flesh may come; and the prophet Amos (ix., 7) represents him as having granted the same providential guidance to the Syrians and the Philistines that was granted to the Hebrews.

In the third place, instead of teaching that God limits the communication of his vital truth to men by tribal lines, the ancient Scriptures teach that, while the heathen had some true knowledge of God, relatively it was not so large as that which Israel possessed. The whole tenor of Old Testament teaching is that, so far as its relation to him will permit, God does as much, in his protecting Providence and by his revealing Spirit, for one nation as he does for another.

8. He criticises the tribal character of the Old Testament religion. Describing the Hebrew religion as a tribal monotheism, although, as he admits, a tribal monotheism of an eminently pure and exalted type, he asserts that "higher than to tribal monotheism it did not rise."

This assertion is singularly inconsistent with the facts of the Old Testament. The religion of Israel started as a tribal monotheism, but it rose to an ethical monotheism. That is to say, the idea of a tribal Deity, who had a special relation to a single people, developed into the idea of an absolute Deity, who has moral relations with every people. In the teaching of the prophets, there is a manifest advance upon the teaching of the Pentateuch respecting the doctrine of God. Many passages might be quoted to show that Israelitism, which commenced as a

The religion may have been raised from tribal monotheism to ethical monotheism.

national religion, restricted in some measure to a single nation, developed, with the progress of revelation, into a universal religion, which knows no national limitations, because it rests upon belief in a Supreme Being who is the Saviour of all the ends of the earth. Nehemiah ix., 6, is particularly full and complete.

Continuing his description of the Hebrew religion, Dr. Smith says, "It advanced no further than to the belief that its god was supreme in power as well as in character to all other gods, and thus Lord of the whole earth." This statement is contradicted by the explicit declarations of the prophets, who, from the time of Isaiah onward, proclaim not only the nothingness of idols, but also the absoluteness of God. The canonical prophets declare emphatically that the gods of the heathen are "no gods, but the work of men's hands"; "dumb idols," which cannot move, much less speak and help. With an equal emphasis they declare not simply that there is no god among the nations like Jehovah, but that there is no god anywhere except him. Hence they represent him as the Lord of the whole earth, not because he is superior in power and character to all other gods, but because all other gods are nothing, and he is God alone.

To this other assertion that the Jew, hampered by lingering tribalism, was unable to "form a conception of the universality and majesty of the moral law such as we find in Plato or in Cicero," one need simply reply that Israel's specialty was not philosophy, but religion. Her representative writers were religious teachers, most of whom lived and wrote before the time when philosophical speculation began to take definite shape in the scientific systems of Plato and Aristotle. Hence we should not look in the Old Testament for abstract statements of reasoned truth, but for practical statements of moral and religious truth. If, however, the Jew could not form a conception of the moral law as high and broad as Plato and Cicero could, he did form a conception of the moral Lawgiver as pure and exalted as they did; and, if his statements of moral truth were not as scientific as theirs, his ideas of moral duty were as adequate. His influence, too, on moral life and character was vastly greater than that of either the Roman or the Greek.

9. He criticises the inadequate character of the Old Testament idea of miracle. After making frequent allusions to the miraculous events recorded in the earlier books of the Bible, he

singles out "the strange episode of Balaam and his colloquy with his ass," and comments on "the stopping of the sun and moon that Israel might have time for the pursuit and slaughter of his enemies."

The story of Balaam is a traditional account of an ancient angelic appearance, belonging to a time when the idea of animals talking with men was practically universal, and is to be interpreted in harmony with that fact. The account of the sun and moon standing still also belongs to a time when men had no strictly scientific conception either of the nature of a miracle or of the constitution of the universe, so that physical phenomena which would now be called extraordinary would then be considered miraculous. The citation from the book of Jasher, to which Dr. Smith refers, is part of an ancient Hebrew poem, which must be interpreted as Oriental poetry. Hence, consistently with the character of the account, the best modern expositors regard the extraordinary phenomenon it describes as a prolongation of the daylight by the ordinary laws of atmospheric refraction.

10. He criticises the undeveloped character of the Old Testament conception of immortality. "Of a belief in the immortality of the soul," he says, "no evidence can be found in the Old Testament."

This assertion is both ambiguous and incorrect. Immortality, in the fullest sense of the term, is a New Testament doctrine. It was Christ, the Apostle declares, who "brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." But, while its teaching on the subject is vague and indefinite, the Old Testament does contain evidence of a belief in a future state of being. The Hebrew Sheol, like the Greek Hades, represents, it is true, a shadowy abode of the dead; but neither the Hebrews nor the Greeks supposed that death was the end of personal existence, or that it involved the loss of personal identity. In the Old Testament, death is represented as a sort of sleep, out of which the shades of the departed in Sheol could be aroused into consciousness, as Isaiah xiv., 9-11, plainly shows. The continued existence of man after death is a conception that goes right through the ancient Scriptures. Even the book of Job, whether one uses the revised or the unrevised version, contains the germ of a belief in a future state of fellowship with God, though the conception is not so fully developed, perhaps, as it is in Psalm lxxiii., 24.

11. He criticises the indefinite character of the Old Testament prophecy respecting Christ. "No real and specific prediction of the advent of Jesus, or of any event in his life," he says, "can be produced from the books of the Old Testament."

This statement is incomplete, and its implication is untrue. It implies that the Old Testament contains no prophecies of a future Messiah which were properly fulfilled in the New Testament Christ, whereas, from the time of Isaiah, the canonical prophets put forth the conception of an ideal Coming One, whom they represent as a ruler, a counsellor, a teacher, and a deliverer or saviour, all of which representations were spiritually fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; so that the Evangelists were not "simple-minded," as Dr. Smith says, but sensible-minded, when they found "in the sacred books of their nation prognostications of the character and mission of Jesus," because such prognostications or foreshadowings of him really occur in them. A number of passages set Christ forth in his character, in his office, and in his work.

It is not the Hebrew Scriptures regarded as a sacred literature, however, but these Scriptures regarded as a supernatural revelation, which renders them, in the estimation of the essayist, a millstone to Christianity. "The time has surely come," he says, "when as a supernatural revelation they should be frankly, though reverently, laid aside." Does Dr. Smith not know that the time has long come since the soundest Christian teachers taught that the Old Testament is not a revelation, but the record of a revelation? These Scriptures are now acknowledged by all scholars to be the record of a revelation which was received, during a long period of time, by a large number of men who spoke or wrote on religious subjects, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, but who made use of a great variety of materials, traditional, historical, and philosophical, according to the fullest knowledge they had, and the soundest judgment they possessed.

Though he rejects the Hebrew Scriptures as a revelation in the obsolete sense which no modern scholar holds, yet, toward the conclusion of his article, he grants that the Old Testament may, so far as it is good, be a manifestation of the Divine. "As a manifestation of the Divine," he says, "the Hebrew books, teaching righteousness and purity, may have their place in our love and admiration forever." In making this admission, he

allows substantially the very thing which Christian scholarship maintains. If these books are a manifestation of God, they must not only, in some sense, be an inspired literature, but also, in some degree, contain a divine revelation. It is this divine element in them which distinguishes them from all other ancient writings.

In their inner spiritual contents, the Hebrew Scriptures are an organic part of the Christian Scriptures. The divine element in the Old Testament was the spiritual germ from which the Gospel evolved, the rudimental teaching out of which the doctrine of Christ was developed. Instead of being Christianity's millstone, therefore, the Old Testament is rather Christianity's foundation-stone, because it forms the spiritual groundwork, so to speak, from which the Christian superstructure rises, or on which the Christian system rests.

GEORGE COULSON WORKMAN.

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would appear as if it were in a fair way of becoming a thing of the past. Dr. Workman has evidently learned what seems to have never occurred to many controversialists, that a hard argument loses nothing in force and effectiveness by being expressed with moderation; and his knowledge of the many admirable qualities of Dr. Goldwin Smith, and the purity of his motives, has led his reviewer to treat him not as an enemy, but as a friend, and a friend, too, who is no less loyal and devoted to the truth than he is himself. This is, of course, as it should be, and it is only because this sort of gentlemanly controversy on the most important of all subjects is so rare that it becomes remarkable. The bare fact that this essay fills seventeen pages of the review, and that it is so closely packed together that it scarcely contains a superfluous word, will show how impossible it is to condense even the boldest outline of the argument into the narrow bounds of a newspaper article. Besides, the object of this article is not to take part in the controversy between Dr. Goldwin Smith and Dr. Workman, but to call attention to what they have written, so that the readers of *The Mail and Empire* may procure the Review and read for themselves what these scholars have written upon the great subject under consideration. It is due, perhaps, to the brilliant essayist who opened the controversy to say that though in point of general scholarship, especially in all that pertains to literature and history, he has few equals, and, perhaps, no superior, he is placed at a disadvantage in this instance by being pitted against a specialist who has made the Old Testament Scriptures the subject of life-long study; who is thoroughly up in the latest phases of the subject; and who is himself an original investigator in this most interesting and important field. It is impossible to read what he has written, especially if one has acquainted himself to any considerable extent with the latest results of Biblical scholarship, without feeling that he is in the presence of a master who, to use a familiar phrase, has the whole subject at his finger ends. So far as we are able to judge, he has been entirely successful in proving that instead of being "Christianity's millstone," the Old Testament, when read in the light of modern Biblical scholarship, is rather "Christianity's foundation-stone," because it forms the spiritual groundwork, so to speak, from which the Christian superstructure rises, or on which the Christian system rests.

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R. GOLDWIN SMITH AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.

To the Editor of *The Globe* :

Sir,—In your issue of last Saturday there appeared from the pen of Prof. Goldwin Smith a letter which I have read with considerable surprise. I regret that he has written such a letter, but will let those who have perused the two essays decide if I have "misconceived the issue and misled the critics."

It is as immaterial to me how he regards my scholarship as it was irrelevant to the subject for him to represent me as a rationalist. The question under consideration is not whether I am a "scholar" or a "rationalist," but whether the Old Testament is a "millstone" which the church should reverently lay aside. The aim of my essay was to show the ethical and religious value of the Hebrew Scriptures in their inner spiritual relation to Christianity.

In former times, religious scholars so magnified the influence of God in the composition of the Scriptures as to see nothing but a divine element in the Bible; and, for a long time, rationalist scholars have so exalted the reason of man in the evolution of religious ideas as to deny the presence in it of any element other than human. Should Christian teachers who perceive a two-fold element in the Bible, but who hold as firmly to the divine element which faith recognizes as to the human element which reason sees, advise students of the Old Testament, perplexed by reason of the special prominence of the human element in it, to cast it off as a cumbersome appendage when every difficulty in it may be rationally solved and when, without it, Christianity can be neither explained nor understood? That were not rational but irrational.

In my essay I have pointed out the sense in which the Hebrew Scriptures are an organic part of the Christian Scriptures. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, I have briefly shown, there is nothing about it that needs to be renounced but a traditional view of its origin and structure; and there is nothing about it that needs even to be modified but an impossible theory of the inspiration of its authors and an irrational method of interpreting its books. Consequently those who, from reading sceptical objections to the Old Testament, have become indifferent or prejudiced in regard to it may rest assured that the only thing about it that ought to be discarded is an old-fashioned way of viewing and treating its literature.

GEORGE COULSON WORKMAN,
Toronto, May 25.